**“One NBDC” meeting notes, 16 January, 2013**

In attendance: Alan Duncan (ILRI), Katherine Snyder (IWMI), Beth Cullen (ILRI), Ewen LeBorgne (ILRI), Simon Langan (IWMI), Randall Ritzema (IWMI), Doug Merrey (via Skype)

Discussion topics were diverse, but primarily pertained to three topics (with some overlap): (1) the Demand side vs. the Supply side of the research-for-development process within the NBDC context, (2) strategies/thoughts on linking the two, and (3) action items. Here are some points under each:

Demand-side vs. Supply-side in NBDC research process

* Simon opened the discussion by reporting on a meeting earlier in the day where Belay (national consultant) presented his perception of the potential demands for NBDC research vs. his understanding of what the research products are.
  + Some potential target groups (demands):
    - Government ministries
    - Donor working group- Important group of stakeholders to try to influence; NBDC/CGIAR should try to get connected. Belay can facilitate the connection.
    - ADPLAC
    - National research system (lower priority?). This might be especially relevant for N2. Suggestion was to perhaps offer a small contract to a national ‘expert’ to generate some potential connections here.
  + NBDC research products (supplies)- Belay was not yet clear on what the program is producing, echoing a common perception even among project researchers.
* Demand-side discussion points
  + Beth: Local communities are not very interested in the science, per se- they are interested in strategies (i.e. sets of practices and approaches) that are customized to their situation.
  + Doug: Wants to add “trainers” to the list of actors.
* Supply-side discussion points
  + Alan: The point of NBDC is not to come up with a specific set of RMS’s, but rather identify the mechanisms to develop and apply RMS’s at the local scale.
  + Disconnects remain between site-level and large-scale analysis. Need to find ways of bridging the gap.
  + SLM has produced information, but the information is often being incorrectly implemented at the community-level.
  + Katherine: We need to differentiate between long-term and short-term strategies. Proposed strategies are typically long-term, but farmers usually have short-term perspectives. We need to address this to be effective.
  + Doug: NBDC has produced many tools- can these be effectively packaged?
  + Modeling
    - Doug: The major message that can come from the modeling is not so much the outputs, but the value that models can have in solving problems.
    - Simon: There is a capacity element as well- Ethiopians need to be able to carry on this work post-NBDC.
    - Alan: How can we use the modeling to reach stakeholders?

Strategies

* Katherine: We often come to the local communities “empty-handed”, i.e. not having some specific technologies that are appropriate for their situation. We need to bring *evidence-based* technologies.
* The urgent need is to clarify what our MESSAGES are, and the AUDIENCES for those messages.
  + Alan: Would like to identify a set of messages over the next month
* Project leaders and indeed all NBDC researchers need to come up with messages/recommendations emerging from their research and proposed target audiences. Then call an NBDC meeting to synthesize messages/recommendations and audiences. Belay can then go to the audiences with clear messages.
* Katherine: There is a general idea that policy needs to be influenced. Where is this coming from? Are there gaps in Ethiopia? Belay might have a sense. Also- It seems that the policies themselves aren't the issue, it's the implementation of the policies that is the problem.
* Doug: We need to keep the theory of change in view. Are we drawing on previous research? Doug reviewed 400 references in preparing N1 outputs. Bottom line is that there has been much already produced in the past on technologies, but the real question is: How do you work with a particular watershed (landscape scale) to identify what needs to be done? This is not yet clear.
* Doug: What are the things we want to see happening by December 2013? Can we identify a set of messages, and focus our efforts on just a few things?
* Simon/Beth: We need to be targeting implementers at the regional level. This has been a ‘missing link’ in NBDC efforts thus far.
* Beth: We are not properly using the National Platform. Need to get messages from the projects, convey them to the National Platform first, then have Belay take messages to the regional level.
  + Simon: N2 is somewhat underspent- could potentially apply some funds to strengthen the National Platform.
* Simon: Perhaps we should take our proposed messages to the stakeholders and prompt them for feedback (1) on their priorities, and (2) whether we have provided sufficient evidence in their opinion to support our messages. We have been a bit unfocused, may need to close down some activities, and distilling messages in collaboration with stakeholders may help in the culling process.
  + Doug: Go through exercise Simon suggested, but with a long-term outlook. This could be an important connection to CRP5.
* Beth: Uptake of some NBDC tools by local communities is strong evidence that the tools are effective.
* Randall: Is ‘linking’ the N-projects (i.e. modifying work plans or budgets) really necessary? Perhaps condensing messages from the individual projects to form a coherent whole is sufficient.
  + Simon: Some modeling would be helpful with specific issues at the site level.
  + There is much data at the site level- is there room for site-level modeling with linkages to the basin-scale?
* Simon: Envisioning a series of learning events, similar to the N4 modeling symposium.
  + Beth: Work with IP’s are generating information that can be fed into training events, etc.

Action Items / things to be done

* Simon: Will harvest proposed messages and target audiences from project leaders, and will send requests by Thursday, 17 January. Beth or Katherine can provide an example. Messages should be interdisciplinary. Request replies from project leaders within a week.
  + Messages should then be run through a refinement process within the NBDC team. An initial list of approximately 10 messages can be condensed down to approximately 5. Such a process will help everyone to see where their work fits in.
  + Doug to provide comment on Simon’s template, and reflect on message feedback.
* NBDC report (??) should be posted on wiki. Alan wants validation from project leaders first.
* Ewen requested that the team revisit OLM’s and output plans. Need to determine ways of reporting against those OLM’s and outputs, and who will be responsible for it.